

Remarks

Claims 11 and 18 of the application have been amended to emphasize the novelty and nonobviousness of the claimed system and unit over the prior art. Claim 12 has also been amended to obviate the rejection specific to it.

Claims 11-15 and 18 stand rejected as having been anticipated by Smith U.S. Patent No. 5,516,298. Claims 16 and 17 stand rejected over the same reference, taken in view of Romer European Patent No. 1,217,919, as having been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. It is respectfully submitted that neither rejection is meritorious.

The Examiner contends that Smith discloses an umbilical cable linking the workstation computer (22') to the user module (72), to provide connections between the peripheral port connectors (50', 51' and 52') and the workstation computer. He further contends that Smith discloses a releasable mass connector 53' coupled to the cable 55' and arranged such that the workstation computer can be disconnected from the peripheral ports by releasing the mass connector.

It is evident however that these contentions distort the true teachings of Smith. And even to the extent that the Examiner's characterizations of Smith's teachings are accurate, moreover, it is evident that they do not correspond to the elements of Applicant's claims and clearly could not render any claim of the application obvious – much less *anticipated*.

In fact, Smith expressly describes the items 55' to be *power cables* (column 6, line 54), which supply the power receptacles 53', the latter being mischaracter-

ized by the Examiner as a “releasable mass connector.” The power cables 55’ of Smith are clearly and obviously separate and distinct from any cable that may link the workstation computer to the peripheral port connectors.¹

Smith contains no teaching or suggestion that the workstation computer 22’ can be disconnected from the peripheral port connectors by releasing the power receptacles 53’, and obviously that could not occur. Indeed there appears to be no clear disclosure in Smith concerning the manner by which the computer is connected in the system described.

It goes without saying that Smith cannot properly be deemed to teach or suggest the essential features of Applicant’s system and unit, as set forth in Claims 11 and 18. In particular, Smith provides no:

releasable mass connector coupled to said single cable and arranged to effect said connections between the peripheral port connectors and the workstation computer, such that the workstation computer can be disconnected from *all* of the peripheral port connectors *simultaneously* by releasing the mass connector.

Instead Smith merely discloses a desk-mounted “harness” (shown in Figure 7, for example) having a number of peripheral port connectors, such as 50’, 51’, and 52’, to which individual peripheral devices such as printers, telephones and fax machines can be connected; voice/data cables 61 exit from the rear of the connectors, leading to “external sources.” There is no disclosure of a cable linking the workstation computer 22’ to all of the peripheral port connectors (or indeed to any

¹ And it might be noted that the same fundamental defects would exist if the Examiner were to refer to the voice/data cabling 61 rather than the power cabling 55’.

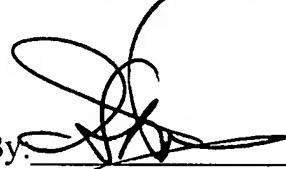
of them), and obviously there is no disclosure of a mass connector which allows the computer to be simultaneously disconnected from all of the peripheral port connectors.

The secondary reference, to Romer, obviously does not cure the fundamental deficiencies of Smith. Consequently, Claims 16 and 17 are allowable, along with the other pending claims, for the reasons set forth above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of the application define an invention that is novel and patentable over the prior art. Withdrawal of the rejections, and passage of the application to allowance, are believed to be clearly in order. Such actions are earnestly solicited.

A petition for two-month extension of time, together with the applicable official fee, is enclosed.

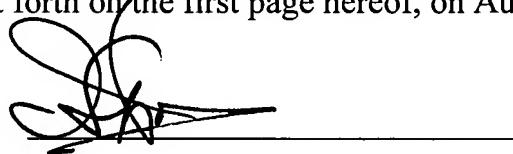
Respectfully submitted,
KEITH GRUNDON

By: 

Ira S. Dorman
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 24,469
Tel.: (860) 528-0772

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I, IRA S. DORMAN, hereby certify that this Preliminary Amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed as set forth on the first page hereof, on August 1, 2007.



cc: Mr. Stephen A. Craske
(SAC/dmc/P1081.US)